

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in light of the following discussion and in view of the present amendment, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 11, 12 and 23 are amended. Claims 25-30 are added. Claims 1-30 are pending in the application.

I. Objection to the Claims

Claim 12 was objected to. In light of the comments noted in the outstanding Office Action, the word "resect" was corrected to "respect". Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this objection be withdrawn.

II. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102

In the Office Action, at page 2, numbered paragraph 3, claims 1-7, 10, 12, 14, 15, 17, 19, 20, 23 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,453,541 to Guthrie et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed because Guthrie does not discuss or suggest "supporting units abutting the discs when the disc springs center the discs and which support the corresponding plate springs with respect to the disc pushers so as to reinforce a restoring force of the plate springs," as recited in independent claim 1 and similarly in independent claim 23.

As a non-limiting example, the present invention is a disc centering device that includes a base plate and a chuck installed on the base plate. A hub unit is detachably engaged to the chuck and receives discs. Disc pushers are slidably provided outside the hub unit and include plate springs that center the discs. Supporting units, provided in at least one side end part of the springs, support the plate springs with respect to the disc pushers to reinforce a restoring force of the springs. A driving unit slides the disc pushers simultaneously. The supporting units abut the discs during the disc-centering operation.

In contrast, Guthrie discusses a disc centering device using multiple springs between a disc support block and either a motor, a disc or a spacer. The disc support block includes an arm member upon which the disc centering springs are mounted. Three sets of disc centering springs are located at 120 degrees from one another and together center the discs. Guthrie does not specifically discuss how the arm member of the disc support block supports the disc centering springs with respect to the disc support block to reinforce restoring force of the plate springs. Further, Guthrie does not discuss or suggest supporting units that abut against the

discs as the disc springs center the discs, as recited in amended independent claims 1 and 23. Guthrie only discusses an arm extending from the disc support block holding the plate springs, but does not discuss or suggest that the supporting unit abuts the disc during centering of the discs, then restores the plate springs to an original state after the disc centering operation, as recited in independent claim 1 and similarly in claim 23.

Therefore, as Guthrie does not teach or suggest "supporting units abutting the discs when the disc springs center the discs and which support the corresponding plate springs with respect to the disc pushers so as to reinforce a restoring force of the plate springs," as recited in claims 1 and 23, claims 1 and 23 patentably distinguish over the reference relied upon. Accordingly, withdrawal of the § 102(b) rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 2-7, 10, 12, 14, 15, 17, 19 and 20 depend either directly or indirectly from claim 1 and claim 24 depends directly from claim 23. Further, these claims include all the features of their respective claims, plus additional features that are not discussed or suggested by the prior art. For example, claim 4 recites that "each of the supporting units includes: a supporting block which supports the side end part of the corresponding plate spring; and at least one screw which fastens the corresponding plate spring to the supporting block." Therefore, as these claims are dependent on either independent claim 1 or 23, they are believed to be allowable for at least the reasons noted above. Accordingly, withdrawal of the § 102(b) rejection is respectfully requested.

III. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

In the Office Action, at page 4, numbered paragraph 4, claims 8 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Guthrie. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 8 and 9 depend either directly or indirectly from independent claim 1. As discussed above, Guthrie does not discuss or suggest the features of claim 1. Applicants respectfully submit that common knowledge of one skilled in the art fails to make up for this deficiency. Further, claims 8 and 9 include all the features of claim 1, plus additional features that are not discussed or suggested by the reference relied upon. For example, claim 8 recites that "the centering value of the discs is maintained within a deviation of about 30 μm or less." Therefore, as these claims are dependent on claim 1, they are believed to be allowable for at least the reasons noted above. Accordingly, withdrawal of the § 103(a) rejection is respectfully requested.

IV. Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner has objected to claims 11, 13, 16, 18, 21 and 22 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants appreciate the acknowledgement by the Examiner that the claims would be allowable, and as such, claims 11, 13, 16, 18, 21 and 22 were rewritten in independent form. Therefore, withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1, 11, 12 and 23 have been amended. Claims 25-30 have been added. Claims 1-30 are pending and under consideration.

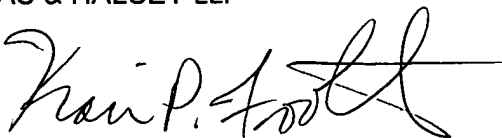
There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935. Respectfully submitted,

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